The Builder.

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SCARCELY a week passes with us without a letter from some anxious spirit seeking guidance or encouragement in the early start of life, apart from technical knowledge. "What shall I do?" and "How shall I do it?" are the questions asked by young men of more than one class of society. "I have no time, no opportunities, no leader," say some; "I am but a mechanic, and you will not think it worth while to answer me," sigh many others. To reply to all these, gentle and simple, even if we could do so usefully, is out of the question. We also are of the workers,—the hard workers too,—and find a long day, with often a long night added, insufficient for the fulfilment of our duties. When practicable, however, we have sought by suggestions to lead the minds of the inquirers into the right direction, to strengthen good resolves, and incite to earnest endeavours; and we would to-day add a few general words in print which may serve as a postscript for more than one correspondent.

We have often asked our readers for their sympathy,—refusing to be regarded simply as recorders of facts, suppliers of class-wants, or exponents of principles in art and science, we have sought to possess their confidence and kind feeling as *men*; and these communications to which we are referring, with other evidence, would seem to show that, to a certain extent at all events, we have succeeded. We have most earnestly at heart the mental elevation and progress of all classes, and we would exhort our younger readers, and those amongst the less favoured by circumstances of even our elder friends, by whom such advice may not be considered impertinent, to apply themselves earnestly to this great object.

Most of us have more time for mental improvement, however short it may be, than we employ profitably. If the day be not our own, there are few who have not the evening, and all who have studied the lives of those who have distinguished themselves and benefitted their fellows, know how much may be done after dark. The extent of what can be achieved in an *hour a day only*, if never missed, would pass the belief of those who have not tried the experiment. Once get the habit of application, be continuous in your efforts, and methodical in your studies, and the rest is easy. As Bacon says, "Since custom is the principal magistrate of man's estate, let men by all means endeavour to obtain good customs. Certainly custom is most perfect when it beginneth in young years: this we call education, which is, in effect, but an early custom."

The great object of education properly considered, is to give the mind that disposition and those habits that may enable the student to attain with ease, that particular knowledge of which he may stand in need. Sadly misunderstood is this same "education." To quote a recent speech,—

"Some teachers of the public, by education mean and understand a mere section of education—instruction alone. They might as well understand by instruction—mathematics alone. But you are not mathematicians, you are not algebraists, you are not classical scholars alone—you are *men*: men before and above all things; and the education which does not provide for the education of such, irrespective of all professional or other after wants of society—which does not purpose and does not achieve the due and equal development of all the faculties and dispositions of the human being, is unworthy, whatever be its other merits, of the name of education. It must be for the whole of man, and for all. Anything less is handicraftism, mere outward dexterity, knowledge and not wisdom, decency and not virtue and religion. It sharpens men into instruments for some other object or some other men; but it does not cultivate the man for himself. And they speak, too, of this education as if it was a thing of rule and square, a something to be given or taken away, to be measured out, so much for so much, like gas-light or pipe-water; as if all education was received in schools, and they could turn it off or let it on just in proportion as they multiplied or diminished their shillings—opened or shut their school-room doors. But education is like the light or air; it encases, it penetrates us; we meet it everywhere, in every point of our manifold life; whatever acts upon the human being from the moment of birth is education; we are all going through a course of education every moment of our waking existence; our health, our occupations, our companions, the house we live in, the sights we see, the words we hear; every conceivable circumstance that acts upon our consciousness, that goes to form or modify our character and dispositions, all are, more or less, our educators."*

How important then are the sights we see, the words we hear!

The maxim, that the bow should not always be bent, is not to be disregarded, still less should it be allowed to lead to never bending the bow at all. Change of occupation is recreation:—

"The labour we delight in physics pain."

"Try all things, hold fast that which is good, is a divine rule," says Locke, "coming from the father of light and truth." And it will be found that we cannot know one thing well and thoroughly without knowing also many other things partially. Discursive reading, and reading without reflection, are at first to be avoided. Select the best books, let them bear one upon another; collect knowledge; strive to form right principles. "Never be puffed up with the thought that you know enough. Man's life is all education, and when he has travelled through his threescore years and ten, he is still a babe in knowledge, only at the beginning, not the consummation of wisdom. Work, then, toil, strive, persevere for yourselves. The triumph of mind over matter in your case must be your own achievement. The tree of knowledge must wither within every individual, if he trusts to others to tend and water it for him. Self-culture is the secret of success, and the passport to renown."†

Those are ill-taught who have not taught themselves.

The progress of the artisan is of especial interest to us; for the advancement of it our most earnest aid is pledged. His position amongst us is below his deserts, as we have on more than one occasion urged. How much do we owe to skilful labour. "What a debt of gratitude," to quote Mr. Aspinal again, "of gratitude unpaid, and, I fear, too often unthought of, does the handwriting on the wall mark up against us at the very mention of the word! Labour! What has it not effected, what is it not constantly effecting, for us. Labour ploughs and digs, and sows and gathers. Labour builds the ship and sails across the ocean, penetrates the most distant climes, and ransacks sea and land, to provide the food which we consume, and the clothes which we wear. Labour erects the house, cuts the railway and the canal, bores the tunnel, rears the viaduct and the bridge, levels the mountain, pierces the rock. It weaves and spins, toils and works, plies the loom, strikes the anvil, thunders at the forge, wields the hammer, sinks the mine, raises the coal, and accomplishes everything, from the monster cable of the noblest of our wooden walls to the most delicate of silken threads in a lady's workbox, and from the loftiest pile of architecture to the scarcely perceptible eye of the smallest needle for which the thread is intended." Well, be it so, it may be some cold and calculating nature will reply; and what then? If labour works for us, do we not pay it for its work, and there does not the mutual obligation end? This is a most miserable way of looking at the matter, and no way of settling it at all. Humanity should not keep such a close debtor and creditor account with man. Property, we have been told, 'has its duties as well as its rights;' and, in like manner, inverting the maxim, we would say, that labour has its rights as well as its duties, and one of its strongest claims upon us is, that we should not only 'give it a fair day's wages for a fair day's work,' but also provide it the school, the library, and the institute, with a fair day's recreation when its fair day's work is done.

From the ranks of the artisans have proceeded some of the benefactors of their species. Many who now sit in high places have worked their way by dint of perseverance, ability, and worth, and serve to shew what others may hope to do who will take the same path.

It should ever be remembered, however, that though to be a good artist—to be a good artisan—is a praiseworthy and noble aim, to be a GOOD MAN is a higher; and that this is not merely open to all, but is required of all. Strive for knowledge, strive for skill, but strive more for wisdom.

* Mr. Wyse's speech at dinner of College of Preceptors.

† From an address delivered a few weeks since at the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute, by the Rev. James Aspinal.

ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM.*

ERROR is never more dangerous than when it takes the form of a proverb. The axiom *de gustibus non est disputandum* has been so often quoted, and unsuspectingly admitted, that to controvert it seems, at first sight, a fruitless task. And yet, when we come to reflect on the conclusions to which this axiom leads, we must, at the least, admit that its accuracy, as affecting the fine arts, is a question of more than abstract interest. If it be once conceded that "there can be no dispute about tastes"—that the sublime and beautiful are not proper subjects for logical discussion, and do not belong to the province of reason,—it immediately follows that the rules of the fine arts are altogether arbitrary and capricious.

This inference, however, would be generally resisted. An architect would be unwilling to allow that the admiration which his art inspires proceeds from no higher cause than the dictates of fashion; on the contrary, he would be predisposed to accept a theory which shewed that admiration to be a natural impulse—an inherent faculty, essential to the human mind, and constituting one of its very elements. Such a view of architecture would elevate it to

* See page 3, *ante*.

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